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The Urban District of Skelmersdale



Annual Report

of the

Medical Officer of Health

for the year

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**SKELMERSDALE URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL
1955**

Chairman W. J. Brown
Vice-Chairman T. Moston

Chairman of the Health Committee W. J. Fenney

F. ACKRAY	A. H. MORGAN
W. J. BROWN	W. MIDDLEHURST
T. A. FARRIMOND	J. W. SHUFFLEBOTHAM
H. HARDMAN	J. T. WAREING
J. T. LATHOM	J. SHARROCK
T. MOSTON	J. S. WILLIAMS

Medical Officer of Health :

J. GORDON HAILWOOD, M.D., Ch.B., M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P., D.P.H.
(Part-time)

(Divisional Medical Officer, Lancashire County Council)

Sanitary Inspector : NOEL BENSON, To July, 1955.

ALBERT LAVELLE, From Oct., 1955.

TO THE CHAIRMAN AND MEMBERS OF THE
HEALTH COMMITTEE

GENTLEMEN,

I have the honour to present my Annual Report on the health of the District during 1955.

The general health has remained good, and the cases of infectious diseases have been extremely low, only thirteen cases being notified during the year.

The Birth Rate for the year was 10.7 per 1,000 population, a reduction on the figure of 14.8 for last year.

The Death Rate was 12.8 per 1,000 population, and was only slightly higher than the figure of 12.5 in 1954. There were no maternal deaths.

The death occurred of two infants under twelve months, giving an infantile death rate of 29 per 1,000 live births. An increase on the figure of 21 last year, but showing a satisfactory state of child care in the township.

No case of Diphtheria occurred, nor has there been such a case in Skelmersdale during the last ten years—an excellent record. The Immunisation state of the child population has remained satisfactory, and accounts in all probability for the freedom from this disease.

During the year, Mr. Benson left the service of the Authority, after some ten years as Sanitary Inspector, during which time he made many friends and did much to improve conditions in Skelmersdale.

Finally, I would thank the Members of the Health Committee for their interest, and the Staff for their ready help and co-operation at all times.

I am, Gentlemen,

Your obedient servant,

J. G. HAILWOOD.

August, 1956.

Area of the District—1,942 acres.

Resident Population (Registrar-General's estimate at mid-1955): 6,380.

Number of inhabited houses according to Rate Books at end of 1955—2,022.

Rateable Value—£24,799.

Sum represented by a penny rate—£95.5383.

SUMMARY OF VITAL STISTICS FOR 1955

Live Births

				Male	Female	Total
Legitimate	...	...	...	36	31	67
Illegitimate	...	...	...	—	1	1

Crude birth rate per 1,000 estimated population — 10.7.

Adjusted birth rate per 1,000 estimated population — 10.7.

Still Births

Legitimate	...	...	...	3	—	3
Illegitimate	...	...	...	—	—	—

Rate per 1,000 total (live and still) births — 42.

Deaths

38 32 70

Crude death rate per 1,000 estimated population — 11.0.

Adjusted death rate per 1,000 estimated population — 12.8.

Deaths from Puerperal Causes:

Puerperal and Post-abortive Sepsis	...	...	...	...	...	—
Other maternal causes	...	...	...	...	...	—

Deaths of Infants under one year of age:

All infants per 1,000 live births	...	...	...	...	2
Legitimate infants per 1,000 legitimate live births	...	...	...	...	2
Illegitimate infants per 1,000 illegitimate live births	...	...	...	...	—
Deaths from Cancer (all ages)	...	...	...	...	9
„ „ Measles (all ages)	...	...	...	...	—
„ „ Whooping Cough (all ages)	...	...	...	...	—
„ „ Diarrhoea (under 2 years of age)	...	...	...	...	—

BIRTHS

There were 68 births registered in the Urban District during the year, of which 36 were male and 31 were female, and including 1 illegitimate birth, which was female. The adjusted birth rate per 1,000 population (mid-1955) (comparability factor 1.00) was 10.7, compared with 14.8 in 1954.

DEATHS

The total number of deaths registered in the Urban District during the year number 70, of this number 38 were male and 32 female. This was an increase of 2 on the figure for 1954. The crude death rate for the year was 11.0 per 1,000 population. The adjusted death rate (comparability factor 1.17) was 12.8 per 1,000 population, compared with 12.5 in 1954.

INFANT MORTALITY

There were no deaths during the year due to Zymotic or Epidemic diseases.

There were 2 deaths of infants under one year, an infantile mortality rate of 29 per 1,000 live births.

MATERNAL MORTALITY

The Maternal Mortality Rate per 1,000 births (live and still) was nil. The figure for England and Wales was 0.64. No maternal deaths occurred in the District during the year.

CAUSES OF DEATH IN THE SKELMERSDALE URBAN DISTRICT, 1955

Causes of Death

							Male	Female
Tuberculosis of the respiratory system	...	...					2	—
Other forms of Tuberculosis	...	...	...	...			—	—
Syphilitic Disease	...	...	...	...	...		—	—
Diphtheria	...	...	...	...	...		—	—
Whooping Cough	...	...	...	...	...		—	—
Meningococcal Infections	...	...	...	...	...		—	—
Acute Poliomyelitis	...	...	...	...	...		—	—
Measles	...	...	...	...	...		—	—
Other infective or parasitic diseases	...	...	...				—	—
Cancer	...	...	...	...	...		5	4
Diabetes	...	...	...	...	...		—	1
Vascular lesions of nervous system	...	...					4	5
Heart diseases	...	...	...	...	...		14	10
Other circulatory diseases	...	...	...	...	...		1	1
Influenza	...	...	...	...	...		—	—
Pneumonia	...	...	...	...	...		1	1
Bronchitis	...	...	...	...	...		2	—
Other diseases of respiratory system	...	...					1	1
Ulcer of stomach and duodenum	...	...	...				—	—
Gastritis, enteritis and diarrhoea	...	...	...				—	—
Nephritis and nephrosis	...	...	...	...	...		1	3
Hyperplasia of prostate	...	...	...	...	...		1	—
Pregnancy, childbirth, abortion	...	...	...				—	—
Congenital malformations	...	...	...	...	...		—	—
Other defined and ill-defined diseases	...	...					3	5
Motor vehicle accidents	...	...	...	...			—	—
All other accidents	...	...	...	...	...		1	—
Suicide	...	...	...	...	...		2	1
Homicide and operations of war	...	...	...				—	—
							<hr/>	<hr/>
							38	32
							<hr/>	<hr/>

Deaths of Infants under 1 Year:

				M	F
Legitimate	...	...	...	2	—
Illegitimate	...	...	...	—	—
				<hr/>	<hr/>
					2

Still Births:

Legitimate	...	...	...	3	—
Illegitimate	...	...	...	—	—
				<hr/>	<hr/>
					3

GENERAL PROVISION OF HEALTH SERVICE FOR THE AREA

Laboratory Facilities

Pathological specimens of a simple nature, throat swabs, etc., are sent for examination at the E.M.S. Pathological Laboratory at the Ormskirk County Hospital. All other specimens are sent to the City Laboratories, Liverpool.

Ambulance Facilities

Ambulance Services are provided by the County Council under the National Health Service Act, 1946.

Clinics and Treatment Centres

A Congregational Schoolroom in Witham Road is utilised every Wednesday morning as a Child Welfare Centre and Minor Ailments Clinic, under the direction of Dr. Robertson Wilson and Nurse Bodley, of the Lancashire County Council.

An Immunisation Clinic is held on the fourth Wednesday afternoon in each month at 2-15 on the same premises by Dr. Robertson Wilson.

HOSPITALS

There are no hospitals in the town.

The Ormskirk County Hospital and the Wigan Hospitals provide ample accommodation for all patients from Skelmersdale.

Infectious cases are admitted to the New Hall Isolation Hospital, Scarisbrick.

SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE AREA

The township is supplied with water by the Southport and District Water Board.

Water is pumped from two bore holes some 750 feet deep at Scarth Hill into the adjoining water tower from which it gravitates through a 7in. main to the district. This pumping station formerly belonged to the Council who sold it to the Southport and District Water Board in 1907. The district mains are still owned by the Council. It is very likely that many of these older mains will be badly corroded owing to the constantly acid nature of the water and the large amount of free carbon dioxide it carries. The water supplied is, however, of the highest standard of organic and bacterial purity.

Work was commenced in October on a scheme to scrape the mains internally by a specialist firm, so as to improve the pressure in the district.

Sewage Disposal

The district is sewered on the partly separate system. The sewage from approximately 1,595 houses in the principal housing area is discharged by gravity through a 24-inch outfall sewer at the Council's Berry Street Disposal Works, and that from 291 houses by a 15-inch outfall sewer at the Penny Lane Works.

Sewage from a small number of houses in the Stormy Area is discharged into settling tanks at the rear of Summer Street.

The sewage at both works is treated by settlement and land irrigation, and periodical cleansing and repairs are carried out.

Work was completed on the new percolating filter bed at Penny Street, which will treat the increased flow from the new High Street housing site.

Closet Accommodation

Privy Middens—74. Number of closets attached to these middens—104.

Number of pail closets—32.

Number of dry ashpits (excluding middens)—Nil.

Number of moveable ashbins—1,918.

Number of houses on water carriage system—1,886.

Number of water closets (including schools, etc.)—1,956.

HOUSING

Number of New Houses Erected during the Year:

(a) Total (including numbers given under) (b): —	
(i) By the Local Authority	25
(ii) By other Local Authorities	—
(iii) By other bodies and Persons	5
(b) With State assistance under the Housing Acts: —	
(i) By the Local Authority	—
(ii) By other bodies or persons	—

1. Inspection of Dwelling Houses during the Year:

(1) (a) Total number of dwelling houses inspected for housing defects (under Public Health or Housing Acts)	1147
(b) Number of inspections made for the purpose ...	1706

(2) (a)	Number of dwelling houses which were inspected and recorded under Housing Consolidated Regulations 1925 and 1932	...	...	...	...	...	11
(b)	Number of inspections made for the purpose	...					11
(3)	Number of dwelling houses found to be unfit for human habitation	...	...	...	...	...	—
(4)	Number of dwelling houses found not reasonably fit for human habitation	...	...	...	...		337
	Number of nuisances discovered	...	...	...	...		574
	Number of nuisances abated	...	...	...	...		519
2.	Remedy of Defects during the year without Service of Formal Notice:						
	Number of defective dwelling houses rendered fit in consequence of informal action by the Local Authority or their Officers	...	...	...	...	...	258
3.	Action under Statutory Powers during the Year:						
	Formal Notices served	...	...	...	...	...	7
	Complied with	...	...	...	...	...	7
4.	Proceedings under Sections 11 and 13 of the Housing Act 1936:						
(1)	Number of dwelling houses in respect of which Demolition Orders were made	...	...	...	...		—
(2)	Number of dwelling houses demolished in pursuance of Demolition Orders	...	...	...	...	...	4

INFECTIOUS DISEASE STATISTICS

[illegible]

NOTIFIABLE DISEASES DURING THE YEAR 1955

NOTIFIABLE DISEASES	TOTAL CASES NOTIFIED													Total Deaths	Hospital	
	Total Cases at all Ages	YEARS													Total Cases removed to Hospital	Deaths in Hospital of persons belonging to district
		Un-der 1 year	1-2	2-3	3-4	4-5	5-10	10-15	15-20	20-35	35-45	45-65 up-wards	65 & up-wards			
SMALLPOX	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
SCARLET FEVER	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
DIPHTHERIA	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
ENTERIC FEVER	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
PARA-TYPHOID FEVER	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
PUERPERAL PYREXIA	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	1	—
ERYSIPELAS	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
POLIOMYELITIS	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
(Non-Paralytic)	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	1	—
PNEUMONIA	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—
MENINGOCOCCAL INFECTION	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
MEASLES	5	—	—	1	1	—	3	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
WHOOPING COUGH ...	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
FOOD POISONING ...	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
DYSENTERY	3	—	—	—	—	—	1	1	—	1	—	—	—	—	1	—
ANTHRAX	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
OPHTHALMIA	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
NEONATORUM	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
PULMONARY	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
TUBERCULOSIS	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	2	1	1
NON-PULMONARY	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
TUBERCULOSIS	1	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—
TOTALS	13	—	—	—	1	2	4	1	—	4	1	—	—	2	5	1

The following table shows the Number, Monthly Distribution and Nature of Cases of Infectious Diseases coming under the notice of the Medical Officer of Health during 1955 :—

	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	Totals	Removed to Hospital
ANTHRAX
SMALLPOX
SCARLET FEVER
DIPHTHERIA
ENTERIC FEVER
PARA-TYPHOID FEVER
ACUTE PNEUMONIA	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...
PUERPERAL PYREXIA	1	...	1	1
MENINGOCOCCAL INFECTION
MALARIA
DYSENTERY	2	1	...	...	...	...	...	3	1
MEASLES	5	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	5	...
WHOOPING COUGH
ERYSIPELAS
OPHTHALMIA
NEONATORUM
ACUTE POLIOMYELITIS
Paralytic
Non-Paralytic	1	...	...	...	...	...	1	1
TOTALS	5	...	...	...	1	2	2	...	...	...	1	...	11	3

DIPHTHERIA IMMUNISATION

The number of children who have completed a full course of Immunisation during the year ending 31st December, 1955, is as follows : —

Children between the ages 0-4 years—82, and children between the ages 5-14 years—67, making a total of 149.

TABLE SHOWING INCIDENCE AND MORTALITY FROM DIPHTHERIA 1945-1955

[illegible]

SCARLET FEVER

TABLE SHOWING INCIDENCE ANND MORTALITY FROM SCARLET FEVER 1945-1955

[illegible]

TUBERCULOSIS

New Cases and Mortality during 1955

Age Periods			NEW CASES				DEATHS			
			Respiratory M.	F.	Non- Respiratory M.	F.	Respiratory M.	F.	Non- Respiratory M.	F.
Years										
0—1	...	...	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
1—5	...	...	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—
5—10	...	...	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
10—15	...	...	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
15—20	...	...	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
20—25	...	...	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
25—35	...	...	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—
35—45	...	...	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
45—55	...	...	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—
55—65	...	...	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—
65 and upwards	...	...	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—
Totals			—	1	—	1	3	—	—	—
			1		1		3		—	

Notifications on Form 1 by Medical Officers of Hospitals

				General and Military Hospitals	Sanatoria and Pulmonary Hospitals
Pulmonary—					
Males	...	...	...	—	—
Females	...	...	...	1	1
Non-Pulmonary—					
Males	...	...	...	—	—
Females	...	...	...	—	—

Dispensary and sanatorium treatment for Tuberculosis is administered by the appropriate department of the Lancashire County Council.

SANITARY INSPECTOR'S REPORT FOR 1955

The changing face of the town is shown by the fact that houses built in the post-war period represent almost one-sixth of the total number in the town. Added to this is the fact that many of the pre-war houses are becoming owner-occupied with consequent improvements, and a start has been made on the slum clearance programme which should, in the next few years, remove those houses in a very poor state of repair.

The new Food Hygiene Regulations will involve major alterations in many of the food premises, particularly where food is being prepared.

It is hoped that 1956 will see the abolition of the few remaining privy middens in the town centre by conversion to W.C.'s.

HOUSING

(a) Improvements

No grants have yet been made under the Housing Act, 1949, although several applications have been made, the majority were withdrawn on the full implications of the Act being brought to the attention of the applicant. Many were of the opinion that it was merely a case of installing a bathroom, whereas, the condition of the whole house must be taken into account when an application is considered.

(b) Repairs

The position remains difficult. In the majority of cases, undue pressure is required to effect repairs, even if urgent. Little use has been made of the provisions of the Housing Repairs and Rents Act, 1954, which enabled owners to increase rents of houses in a sound state of repair. In practically all such houses, some repairs were necessary before the rents could be increased, and the owners were reluctant to do the repairs.

FOOD

(a) Premises

Many improvements have been made in premises, and retailers are generally alive to the need for such improvements. Some have anticipated the new regulations by effecting certain improvements, but much work will be necessary generally, when the new regulations come into force in 1956.

(b) Unsound Food

The under-mentioned articles of food were, on inspection, found unfit for human consumption, voluntarily surrendered and destroyed.

Food					Weight
Ham	...	...	...	...	209 lbs.
Tongue	...	...	...	...	9 lbs.
Corned Beef	...	...	...	...	19 lbs.
Sausages	...	...	...	...	8 lbs.
Cheese	...	...	...	...	77 lbs.
Blackberries	...	...	...	...	37 lbs.

(c) Adulteration of Food

The following samples of food were taken by the Lancashire County Council, who are responsible in this district for Sections of the Food and Drugs Act 1938/1950, dealing with food adulteration.

Food					No. of Samples
Milk	...	...	...	...	34
Butter	...	...	...	...	1
Christmas Puddings	...	...	...	...	2
Ground Almonds	...	...	...	...	1
Dripping	...	...	...	...	1
Semolina	...	...	...	...	2
Fruit (dried)	...	...	...	...	1
Herbs (dried)	...	...	...	...	2
Mustard Compound	...	...	...	...	1
White Pepper	...	...	...	...	1
Cream of Tartar	...	...	...	...	1
Ground Nutmeg	...	...	...	...	1
Ground Mixed Spice	...	...	...	...	1

All the above samples were reported by the County Analyst to be genuine.

DAIRIES

There is only one registered dairy, and this has been regularly inspected and maintained in a satisfactory condition.

Milk Retailers Licences

The following licences were issued during the year : —

Tuberculin Tested	...	...	...	4
Pasteurised	...	...	...	7
Sterilised	...	...	...	25

Milk Sampling

The following samples were submitted for examination : —

Grade	Test	Samples	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Raw	T.B.	1	1	—
	Methylene Blue	1	1	—
Pasteurised	Phosphatase	5	5	—
	Methylene Blue	4	4	—
Sterilised	Turbidity	1	1	—

ICE CREAM

There are 16 premises registered for the sale of ice cream. There are no manufacturers.

All samples taken and submitted for examination were satisfactory.

RODENT CONTROL

Routine inspections for the destruction of rats and mice were carried out and treatment done by the part-time Rodent Operator. Private premises were treated free of cost, and a charge made for business premises, using “Warfarin.” No major infestations were discovered.

Maintenance treatment for the destruction of rats in sewers were carried out in March and September, using alternatively, the poisons Zinc Phosphide and Arsenic. There was no serious reinfestation of the sewers.

Attention was paid to the control of infestation at the Council’s Sewage Works and Refuse Tip.

REFUSE COLLECTION AND DISPOSAL

This service is carried out under the supervision of the Sanitary Inspector. A new diesel-driven Karrier freighter was purchased in October. It has a capacity of 10 cubic yards as against 7 cubic yards of the previous vehicle. This will effect a saving in time in less frequent visits to the tip. The use of diesel will also effect fuel economy.

Dustbins and pail closets are emptied weekly, and privy middens as often as possible. An effort is to be made during 1956 to abolish all middens, and replace them by either pails or W.C.'s.

Disposal of refuse is by semi-controlled tipping in a disused stone quarry.

SALVAGE

Waste paper is collected and placed in sacks hung on the back of the freighter.

13 tons 12 cwts. were sold during the year, the value being £119.

SHOPS

There are 106 shops on the register, each of which has been visited twice during the year.

Duties under the Shops Act, 1950, relating to the employment of young persons, washing facilities, etc., were carried out on behalf of the County Council.

SCHOOLS

The four schools in the district were visited, and the sanitary accommodation inspected.

All four have W.C.'s, but there still remains the provision of automatic flushing for the urinals at each school.

FACTORIES

Routine visits have been made to the factories in the district, and any defects found, remedied without the service of Statutory Notices.

ATMOSPHERIC POLLUTION

A number of visits have been made to three factories with boiler houses in the district. In only one instance was it necessary to take several smoke observations, and conditions improved after advice given to the stoker.

Summary of the Work of the Sanitary Inspector

Number of dwelling houses inspected under Public Health and Housing Acts	1147
Number of re-visits to premises	1706
Visits to factories and work places	18
Visits to food premises	61
Visits re infectious disease	6
Visits to schools	11
Visits to licensed houses	29
Visits to shops	201
Visits to hawker's vehicles	10
Visits re rodent control	31
Visits re bacteriological samples of milk	6
Number of preliminary notices served	258
Number of preliminary notices complied with	229
Number of statutory notices served	7
Number of statutory notices complied with	7

